



GEORGIA AQUARIUM

at Pemberton Place

## **RESEARCH & CONSERVATION**

One of the Georgia Aquarium's goals is to be the leading facility for aquatic animal conservation and research. The Georgia Aquarium conducts research to improve husbandry methods, develop innovative and exciting new exhibits, contribute to the understanding of the underwater world and apply new discoveries to the conservation of aquatic life. Everyday, researchers in the Aquarium's exhibits and labs are learning more about marine life in order to develop new methods of animal care and veterinary medicine. By combining field research with the study of on-site animals in a controlled environment, the Aquarium is contributing to the advancement of human knowledge in the area of animal science. Research is shared with scientists and conservation organizations throughout the world, allowing a better understanding and protection of many of the species located at the Georgia Aquarium.

### **The Correll Center for Aquatic Animal Health**

The Correll Center for Aquatic Animal Health is a state-of-the-art animal health facility with more than 10,500 square feet and was designed by world-class veterinary professionals from academic and aquarium facilities. Currently, it is the only planned integration of an aquarium and veterinarian teaching hospital program. The partnership with the University of Georgia (UGA) Veterinary Teaching Hospital allows the Aquarium to provide complete aquatic animal pathology program while training veterinary residents, interns and veterinary students. The Aquarium provides the same veterinary diagnostic, medical treatment and surgical services used at the best veterinary teaching hospitals. The Correll Center for Aquatic Animal Health conducts ground-breaking research, analyzing nutrition, parasitology, pathology and hematology. This clinical research benefits animals in zoological environments as well as populations in the field.

### **4R Program**

The 4R Program was designed to make a positive difference in the health and well-being of aquatic life around the world. The program allows the public to be directly involved in making a positive difference in the lives of animals through their financial contributions. The 4R program focuses on one project at a time and is funded in a large part by individual donations.

**R**ehabilitation, **R**esponsibility, **R**escue and **R**esearch are the four areas of focus for this

program. Animals that have benefited from this program include a beluga whale, two loggerhead sea turtles and two southern sea otters.

Nico, a male beluga whale, was rescued by the Aquarium from substandard living conditions at a private amusement park. Nico was underweight and suffered from skin lesions. When the park came under new owners, they worked with the Aquarium to relocate Nico to the Georgia Aquarium, where better care could be provided.

Dylan, a loggerhead sea turtle, was rescued as a stranded hatchling on the beach at Jekyll Island. After outgrowing the Tideland's Nature Center aquarium on the island, the Georgia Aquarium provided a new home for Dylan. After growing significantly, Dylan was relocated to the Georgia Sea Turtle Center, where he is being weaned off human care and will then return to the ocean.

Gracie, a southern sea otter, was found by another facility after she had been stranded. She was rehabilitated, released and found stranded again. Gracie was rehabilitated and released again and found stranded a third time. After the third stranding, Gracie was deemed unable to live outside a zoological facility and was relocated to the Georgia Aquarium, where she has thrived and gained significant weight.

### **Seafood Savvy Program**

Seafood is an important and widely available source of nutrition for populations around the world. Increased demand for popular seafood is depleting global fish stocks and harming the health of our oceans. Individuals, along with restaurants, retailers and other businesses can play a vital role in conserving the health of our oceans. The Seafood Savvy Program is designed to empower seafood consumers and businesses to make informed choices for healthy oceans and ensure abundant supplies of seafood for the future. The Seafood Savvy Guide is a pocket card that can be carried as a resource to access while ordering from a restaurant menu or making a selection at your seafood market. For more information, visit

<http://www.georgiaaquarium.org/conservation/seafoodsavvy/>.

### **Water Conservation**

Water conservation is a concern of the Georgia Aquarium, and we are taking the necessary measures to ensure our water supply is plentiful. The Georgia Aquarium has cut water usage back by 10 percent and is planning on reducing their annual usage by a total of about 20 percent once all projects in progress are completed. All Georgia Aquarium exhibits are closed

systems in which the water is filtered, treated as required and returned to the exhibit. The Aquarium recycles and reuses as much water as possible within the limits of providing our animals with the best care. A few of the many water conservation measures include:

- Adding waterless urinals that save approximately one million gallons of water per year.
- Recapturing condensation from our cooling units, saving 1.5 million gallons of water per year.
- Life Support operational changes that save approximately 4.5 million gallons of water per year.
- Observing the outdoor watering ban on all our landscaping.
- Shutting off all non-essential water features, such as the waterfall, atrium lake and shrimp boat moat.
- Educating the public at the Aquarium through our staff and volunteers on the floor, signage/displays and Web site about ways individuals can conserve water.

### **Whale Shark Conservation**

The Georgia Aquarium is working in conjunction with researchers in Mexico and Taiwan, as well as Mote Marine Laboratory, to track whale sharks with visual and satellite tags. To date, more than 550 whale sharks have been tagged, increasing our understanding of their natural history. Field research supported by the Georgia Aquarium off the coast of the Yucatan peninsula of Mexico is advancing understanding of behavior, feeding patterns and nutritional requirements of whale sharks. This multi-faceted program also focuses on population study and satellite tracking.

### **Education Research**

The Georgia Aquarium, in collaboration with the University of West Georgia, is conducting educational research classes. In the pilot study, 5<sup>th</sup> grade students who completed the course experienced significant increases in test scores.

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For additional information, please contact Public Relations:

Meghann Gibbons  
Director  
(404) 581-4109  
mgibbons@georgiaaquarium.org

Francesca Allegra  
Specialist  
(404) 581-4319  
fallegra@georgiaaquarium.org

Mackenzie Whalen  
Coordinator  
(404) 581-4230  
mwhalen@georgiaaquarium.org

### **About the Georgia Aquarium**

The Georgia Aquarium in Atlanta, Georgia, is the world's largest with more than eight million gallons of water and the largest collection of aquatic animals. The mission of the Georgia Aquarium is to be an entertaining, educational and scientific institution featuring exhibits and programs of the highest standards; offering engaging and exciting guest experiences promoting the conservation of aquatic biodiversity throughout the world. The Georgia Aquarium is an accredited member of the Association of Zoos and Aquariums and the Alliance of Marine Mammal Parks and Aquariums. For additional information, visit [www.georgiaaquarium.org](http://www.georgiaaquarium.org).

**About the Georgia Aquarium's Conservation Collaborators**

The Georgia Aquarium is currently working in collaboration with the Mote Marine Laboratory, University of Georgia, Georgia State University, Georgia Institute of Technology, Savannah State University, Skidaway Institute of Oceanography, Jekyll Island Sea Turtle Rehabilitation Center, Marine Mammal Alliance, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration and Sea Grant College Program.